

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, the applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are not rendered obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103. Accordingly, it is believed that this application is in condition for allowance. If, however, the Examiner believes that there are any unresolved issues, or believes that some or all of the claims are not in condition for allowance, the applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact the undersigned to schedule a telephone Examiner Interview before any further actions on the merits.

The applicants will now address each of the issues raised in the outstanding Office Action.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-10, 12-15 and 30-35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,307,549 ("the King patent") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,453,315 ("the Weissman patent"). The applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw this ground of rejection in view of the following.

On April 6, 2006, the undersigned contacted the Examiner in an effort to schedule a telephone interview. The Examiner was not inclined to grant a telephone interview but indicated that if claim 1 were amended to include the features of claims 8 and 10, it would place this application into condition for allowance (at least

in view of the art of record). Claim 1 has been amended accordingly. Independent claims 30, 31, 32 and 38 have been similarly amended. Finally, independent claim 14, as amended, is similarly allowable.

Claims 8 and 10-13 have been canceled.

Since claims 2-7, 9, and 33-35 depend, either directly or indirectly from claim 1, these claims are similarly allowable. Since claim 15, as amended, depends from claim 14, it is similarly allowable.

Claims 16-20, 26-28 and 36-38 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the King patent in view of the Weissman patent and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,226,635 ("the Katariya patent"). The applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw this ground of rejection in view of the following.

Each of independent claims 16, 26 and 38 have been amended to include features corresponding to those found in canceled claims 8 and 10. Therefore, these claims are allowable. Since claims 17-20 depend, either directly or indirectly, from amended claim 16, and since claims 27, 28, 36 and 37 each depend from amended claim 26, these claims are similarly in condition for allowance.

Entry of Amendments

Since the amendments raise no new issues, but rather adopt an Examiner suggestion to place this application into condition for allowance (at least in view of the art of record), or cancel claims, they should be entered.


Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, the applicants request that the Examiner pass this application to issue.

The applicants reserve their right to pursue any unclaimed subject matter, such as in one or more continuation applications.

Respectfully submitted,

June 2, 2006

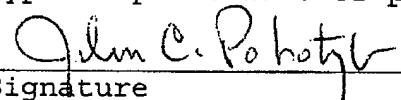

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